

# THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

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## I.

### SKETCHES FROM THE BIOGRAPHY OF SYDENHAM.

THIS great man effected a real revolution in physic, and no one ever had a more just claim to the title of a restorer of true medical science. But his was the triumph, not so much of transcendent genius, as of good sense over vague hypothesis: to him the praise belongs of having been an accurate observer, who, endowed with great sagacity, conducted his researches with skill, and was guided by a sure method in all his investigations. In a word, no physician ever exerted so beneficial an influence over that branch of the art, to which all others are subservient, viz. its practical application. His claims to our admiration will appear the greater, if we reflect for a moment that he lived at a time when chemistry, and the sect of the mathematical physicians, were in the highest vogue; and pause to consider the difficulties which he must have encountered, when he recommended to his countrymen to follow the footsteps of nature and experience.

Thomas Sydenham was born in the year 1624, at Wynford Eagle, in Dorsetshire, where his father, William Sydenham, Esq. had a large fortune. The house in which he was born was formerly a considerable mansion, but it is now con-

verted into a *farm-house*, and stands on the property of the present Lord Wynford.

Under whose care he was educated, or in what manner he passed his childhood—what youthful discoveries he made of a genius peculiarly adapted to the study of nature—what presages of his future eminence in medicine he afforded—no information is to be obtained. That he gave some early indications of talent can, however, scarcely be doubted, since it has been observed, that there is no instance of any man, whose history has been *minutely* related, that did not in every part of his life discover the same proportion of intellectual vigor. At the age of eighteen, he was entered a commoner of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, in midsummer term 1642, but left the university as soon as it became a garrison for Charles I. Now the battle of Edge Hill was fought in the month of October of that year, and a few days afterwards the king retired to Oxford. At this distance of time, it is curious to speculate whether the young Sydenham, a freshman at college, could by any possibility have become acquainted with the great discoverer of the circulation of the blood, then in attendance upon the unfortunate monarch: probably not. It is certain they espoused different sides in politics: for while Harvey was a staunch royalist, Sydenham

joined the army of the Parliament, though he spent a few years only in the camp, and never attained a higher rank than that of captain. His ultimate choice of a profession was determined by an accidental acquaintance with Dr. Coxe, a physician eminent at that time in London, who in some sickness prescribed for the brother of Sydenham, and, entering into conversation with him, inquired what walk of life he designed to follow. The young man answering that he was undetermined, the doctor recommended physic to him, and his persuasion was so effectual, that he returned to Oxford, for the purpose of enjoying leisure and opportunity to pursue his medical studies. Here he employed himself with diligence; and was created bachelor of physic, April 14, 1648, at the visitation of the university by the Earl of Pembroke.

It is not true, therefore, as has been asserted by Sir Richard Blackmore, that "he was made a physician by accident and necessity, without any preparatory discipline, or previous knowledge, and that he never designed to take it up as a profession, till the civil wars were composed, when, being a disbanded officer, he entered upon it for a maintenance." Sir Richard, after hazarding these assertions, tells us in proof of them the following story:—"When one day I asked Sydenham to advise me what books I should read, to qualify me for practice, 'Read Don Quixote,' replied he, 'it is a very good book, I read it still.' So low an opinion," continues the knight, "had this celebrated man of the learning collected out of the authors, his predecessors." Upon this story it has been shrewdly remarked, "That Sydenham recommended Don Quixote

to Blackmore, we are not allowed to doubt; but the relater is hindered by that self-love which dazzles all mankind from discovering that he might intend a satire, very different from a general censure of all the ancient and modern writers on medicine, since he might, perhaps, mean, either seriously or in jest, to insinuate that Blackmore was not adapted by nature to the study of physic, and that whether he should read Cervantes or Hippocrates, he would be equally unqualified for practice, and equally unsuccessful in it." Thus does Johnson repel the charge brought against Sydenham, of having commenced practice without previous study; but why it should be thought necessary to deny that he exercised his profession for a maintenance, does not seem very obvious; his father, indeed, may be allowed to have been a gentleman of plentiful estate, and yet the son require the emoluments of a gainful profession; and who has ever practised physic, and risen to any eminence in it, who has disdained to receive the reward of his skill and diligence?

About this time, Sydenham was elected a fellow of All Souls' College, and remained some years at Oxford, studying his profession, but he took his doctor's degree at Cambridge.

On leaving the English universities, he travelled to Montpelier, at that time the most celebrated school of physic, in quest of further information, and on his return to his native country, settled in Westminster, where he soon rose to eminence as a practitioner. In 1663, on the 25th June, when he was thirty-nine years of age, he was admitted a member of the College of Physicians of London. The biography of Sydenham is re-

markably barren of events, more so, perhaps, than that of any other eminent physician, and it is only by perusing his works carefully, that one is enabled to pick up a few solitary facts illustrative of his private history. Of his published treatises, it has been said, that most of them were extorted from him by his friends, and several written by way of letter, to gentlemen who desired his opinion on any particular subject, or pressed him to make public what observations he had made.

His "*Methodus Curandi Febres, &c.*" appeared for the first time in 1666, and the chapter on smallpox, which it contains, is extremely interesting, not only because it presents us with his novel method of treating the disease, but because it furnishes a most curious example of the caution with which he reasoned upon the cause or origin of that formidable malady. It has lately been asserted, that no hint whatever is to be found in the writings of Sydenham, that he thought the smallpox could arise from contagion; a trace, however, is discoverable in the treatise of which we are now speaking, that the idea had once crossed his mind, though he ultimately rejected it. To enlarge upon this very curious piece of medical literature would here be out of place; yet the general reader can scarcely fail to be surprised, that so obvious a property as the contagious nature of the smallpox should have escaped the sagacity of such a man as Sydenham. So however it was!

As to his practice in that disease, it is best explained in his own words—"I see no reason," says he, "why the patient should be kept stifled in bed, but rather that he may rise and sit up a few hours

every day, provided the injuries arising from the extremes of heat and cold be prevented, both with respect to the place wherein he lies, and his manner of clothing." The rivals of Sydenham contended, that the whole of his treatment consisted in doing nothing, and that he made a great stir about what, according to him, might be comprehended in two words—*nilil agendum*. This opposition on the part of his medical brethren, together with the prejudices of mankind, threw many obstacles in the way of its general adoption, but its author foretold with confidence, and with truth, that, after his own death, it would prevail. The fact is, that though Sydenham lived in the first degree of reputation, enjoyed the friendship and acquaintance of many of the most eminent men of his day, amongst others, that of the illustrious Locke, and was in very considerable practice; yet he never possessed that overwhelming ascendancy and irresistible popularity which his immediate successor attained. Nor were the improvements of Sydenham fully appreciated by the world, till they were forced upon the notice of the public by Radcliffe, who, in this way, advanced the art of medicine much more than by any original discoveries of his own.

The part he took in the civil wars, and the politics of his brother, William Sydenham, who, under the Protectorate, obtained many high appointments, amongst others the post of governor of the Isle of Wight, might possibly have kept him out of favor with the court; in truth, he appears to have been desirous only of conscientiously doing his duty to the utmost of his power, and chiefly anxious to practise his profession in the

most unostentatious manner. His distaste for popularity (for it could not be affectation in so candid a nature) may be inferred from these expressions, in the epistle prefixed to his chapter on the gout :—"I do not much value public applause ; and, indeed, if the matter be rightly weighed, the providing for esteem (I being now an old man) will be, in a short time, the same as to provide for that which is not : for what advantage will it be to me after I am dead, that eight alphabetical elements, reduced into that order that will compose my name, shall be pronounced by those who come after me ? "

At the commencement of his professional life, it is handed down to us by tradition, that it was his ordinary custom, when consulted by patients for the first time, to hear attentively the story of their complaints, and then say, "Well, I will consider of your case, and in a few days will order something for you." But he soon discovered that this deliberate method of proceeding was not satisfactory, and that many of the persons so received forgot to come again ; and he was consequently obliged to adopt the usual practice of prescribing immediately for the diseases of those who sought his advice.

In 1668, a new edition of his *Methodus, &c.*, appeared, to which was added a chapter upon the great plague of 1665. Sydenham observes, that some might think him rash and arrogant, for pretending to write upon this subject, as he was several miles distant from the city, during the greatest part of the time the plague raged, and therefore might be supposed not to be sufficiently furnished with observations : but "seeing that more skilful physicians, who bravely ventured to

continue during so very dangerous a time, have not yet written upon that subject, he hopes that all good men will pardon him for publishing his opinion upon that dreadful national calamity." It seems that he remained in the metropolis till about the middle of June, 1665, about which time the plague raged so cruelly, that in the space of seven days it destroyed as many thousands in London. Then, being endangered by the near approach of the pestilence to his own house, at length, by the persuasion of friends, he accompanied the vast numbers of those that left the city, and removed his family some miles from thence.

Sydenham returned to London so very soon, and when the plague continued still so very violent, "that it could not be (he says with great modesty) but by reason of scarcity of better physicians, I should be called in to the assistance of those who had the disease." Thus he saw both the beginning and the end of this great epidemic, and he did not neglect to profit by his opportunities of observation.

From his treatise on the Gout, which has always been considered a masterpiece of description, we learn that he had suffered from the attacks of that painful disease during the greatest part of his life. In the dedication, which is to the learned Dr. Thomas Short, Fellow of the College of Physicians, he mentions, that while composing the treatise itself, he was so tormented with the gout, that he was unable to hold a pen, and was obliged to employ an amanuensis. It was written in 1683, and begins thus :—"Without doubt men will suppose that either the nature of the disease I now treat of is in a manner incomprehensible, or that I,

who have been troubled with it thirty-four years, am a very dull fellow, seeing my observations about it and the cure of it little answer their expectations." With the graphic pen of one who has suffered the terrible martyrdom of this disease in his own person, he describes—"How the patient goes to bed and sleeps well till about two o'clock in the morning, when he awakes with a pain seizing his great toe, heel, calf of his leg, or ankle; it is at first gentle, increases by degrees, and resembles that of dislocated bones: towards the following night it reaches its height, accommodates itself nicely to the various forms of the bones of the instep, whose ligaments it seizes, resembling the gnawing of a dog, and becomes, at length, so exquisite, that the part affected cannot bear the weight of the clothes upon it, nor the patient suffer any one to walk hastily across the chamber. The severity of this first attack continues for twenty-four hours, when the sufferer enjoys a little ease, begins to perspire, falls asleep, and when he awakes finds the pain much abated, but the part swollen. The next day, and, perhaps, for the two or three following days, towards evening, the torture returns, but remits towards the time of cock-crow. In a few days, the other foot is destined to endure the same excruciating agony." Sydenham goes on to enumerate the catalogue of complaints that afflict the gouty person,—“till at last he is worn out by the joint attacks of age and of the disease, and the miserable wretch is so happy as to die.” And here he makes the following moral observation:—“But (which consideration ought to be a comfort to others as well as to myself, who, though we are but

moderately endowed with mental acquirements and the gifts of fortune, yet are afflicted with this disease) thus have lived, and thus at length have died, great kings and potentates, generals of armies, admirals of fleets, philosophers, and many other equally distinguished personages.” With this cruel disease he contended from the early age of twenty-five; and he speaks of a fit with which he was seized in 1660, when he was only thirty-six, which was very violent, and continued longer than any preceding attack. He lay, continually, for two months, during the summer of that year, either in or upon a soft bed; and then, for the first time, began to feel the symptoms of an equally painful and distressing malady, the gravel.” In 1676, after the breaking up of a great frost, and having walked much, and for a long time, he suffered a very severe paroxysm; and the symptom which alarmed him recurred as often as he rode in a coach along the paved streets, though the horses went gently.

This complication of disorders made it very necessary for him to be attentive to his diet, which he regulated, as he informs us, after this manner:—“In the morning, when I rise, I drink a dish or two of tea, and then ride in my coach till noon\*; when I return home, I moderately refresh myself with any sort of meat, of easy digestion, that I like (for moderation is necessary above all things); I drink somewhat more than a quarter of a pint of Canary wine, immediately after dinner, every day, to promote the digestion of the food in my stomach, and to drive the gout from

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\* At the present time, no physician thinks of leaving his home before the hour that Sydenham was returning from his round of morning visits to his patients.

my bowels. When I have dined, I betake myself to my coach again; and, when business will permit, I ride into the country, two or three miles, for good air. A draught of small beer is to me instead of a supper, and I take another draught when I am in bed, and about to compose myself to sleep."

The treatise from which this extract is made, was the last published in his lifetime, and he concludes it, by observing, that he has now given to the world the sum of all which he had hitherto known concerning the cure of diseases, up to the day on which he wrote it, viz., to the 29th of September, 1686. His work, entitled *Processus Integri*, the compendious result of all his practical experience, was published after his death, and has been generally considered to have settled the question, as to whether he wrote his treatises in English, and procured them afterwards to be translated into Latin. This posthumous work exhibits so much classical learning, that Dr. Johnson (no mean judge in these matters) pronounces Sydenham to have been well versed in the writings of antiquity, more particularly in those of the great Roman orator and philosopher, whose luxuriance of style he appears to have endeavored to imitate.

The gout and the stone were distempers which even the art of Sydenham could only palliate, without hope of a cure; but if he has not been able, by his precepts, to instruct us how to remove them, he has at least left us his example how to bear them; he never betrayed any indecent impatience or unmanly dejection under his torments—on the contrary, supported himself by the reflections of philosophy and the consolations of religion; and in

every interval of ease applied himself to the assistance of others with his usual assiduity.

After a life thus usefully employed, he died at his house, in Pall Mall, on the 29th of December, 1689.

## II.

### ON THE PROPERTIES OF THE GARDEN SAGE.

By the Right Hon. SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART. author of "The Code of Health."

THE writer, who had long been troubled with swellings, and even ulcerations in his throat, which for years he had not been able effectually to remove, resolved at last to try the effects of using a lotion of one-third verjuice, (the juice of the crab-apple,) and two-thirds cold water, with a view of strengthening the throat against the effects of cold weather. He applied it to the outside of the throat, by rubbing it in with a piece of flannel. Against sore throats arising from cold, this remedy proved highly beneficial; but still he found that the uvula and parts adjacent would often swell and become inflamed, though they did not ulcerate. These swellings were accompanied with defluxion.

Being convinced that all this proceeded from the stomach, he resolved to try the effects of "sage tea," of the virtues of which he had long entertained a favorable opinion; and to his great satisfaction he found, by using it, not only that the swelling and defluxion disappeared, but that the stomach was brought into so healthy a state, that a whiteness on the tongue, with which he had been previously troubled, was removed. In every other respect, also, his health was

materially amended. He only took a wine-glass of sage tea occasionally, and about a pint in the day. He considers it to be one of the most valuable of stomachic remedies, and that the old praises in favor of sage, (when it is properly used,) are not exaggerated. Indeed he is convinced, if these hints were properly attended to, that complaints in the throat, and in the stomach, would be oftener removed than they are at present, and that the health of multitudes would be greatly improved.

Sir John has appended to his communication the following letter from Dr. Hancock :—

"SIR,—I am gratified to find that any humble contributions of mine should have been noticed by so distinguished a votary of science, and friend of humanity, as Sir John Sinclair; and that pleasure is much enhanced by the very interesting *Medical Hints* with which I am favored. It would afford me a real gratification to be acquainted with the learned author of *The Code of Health*; from which work, in Demerara, I have, years ago, derived great pleasure and instruction, as well as relief from personal suffering,—by measures, strangely neglected by the sedentary and by invalids, as frictions, baths, and other means there indicated.

"I have long been convinced of the great value of sage, though ignorant of the uses you have indicated, in affections of the throat and stomach. Those Hints deserve special and serious attention from the faculty, in these and various other disorders. I can readily believe its efficacy in dyspeptic cases; and, considering their prevalence, it will clearly appear, how important it is to make universally

known a boon of nature so valuable, and within the reach of every one. The plant, I am persuaded, well merits its name, if not the Latin distich inscribed to it. It is held in the highest estimation by the Spaniards, who call it by the same appellation. But you have not, Sir, as I with deference conceive, adverted to its paramount uses, which, indeed, appear to be little known; for, taken freely, it is one of the best of febrifuges, especially in typhoid forms of fever, such as those in which the Angustura bark has also been found pre-eminent in South America. However treasonable it may seem, I confess my conviction, that this humble plant of our gardens, by simple infusion\* as tea, is possessed of greater virtues than the quinine, drawn, by the most elaborate chemical process, from the bark brought from the Peruvian mountains. Quinine cures intermittent fevers. And sage will cure those malignant and pestilential forms of fever which the bark is found to aggravate. It is moreover an excellent remedy in dysentery and cholera morbus.

"The species and varieties of salvia are numerous, possessing, however, similar properties, differing in degree. A true species of this genus grows wild in the northern states of America, called frost-weed and cancer-root, being one of the most celebrated Indian remedies for the cure of cancer and other stubborn ulcers, by inward and outward use."

*Gazette of Practical Medicine.*

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\* The medicinal virtues of sage and rosemary chiefly residing in their essential oils, a preference should be given to an infusion of them, the essential oils being dissipated by boiling.—ED.

## III.

## IDENTITY OF THE RUSSIAN AND THE INDIAN CHOLERA. DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE COMMON BILIOUS CHOLERA AND THE SPASMODIC CHOLERA.

By DR. HAWKINS, of London.

IT will be necessary to afford some evidence of the connection between the epidemics, although few persons at present appear to entertain any doubts upon the subject. All the Russian Official Reports unite in showing that the disease is one and the same.

I believe that I may be allowed to state that Dr. Ashburner, of this metropolis, who has not only witnessed in others, but has suffered in his own person, the symptoms of the Spasmodic Cholera of India, declares that they are the same as those which have been described in Russia.\* Dr. Russel, who has spent many years in India, and has had abundant opportunities of observing and treating the disease, delivered the same opinion on hearing the symptoms enumerated by Sir William Crichton. The Report of the Committee of Warsaw agrees nearly with the Indian accounts.

Dr. Searle, who has very recently published a work on Cholera (1830), has since travelled to Poland, in order to compare on the spot the European and the Indian Cholera. Although his opinion has not yet been made public, we understand that he has expressed in letters to some friends in England his decided opinion, that the disease is the same in India and in

Poland. We trust that his observations on the subject will soon be published in detail.

According to Dr. Schnurrer, physician to the Duke of Nassau, who has lately published a work on this subject, the symptoms of the disease have offered scarcely any difference in any of the countries which it has visited. He describes the matter thrown off as resembling *rice milk*, or starch.

Dr. Riecke, who has also recently written a book on the same topic, believes that the disease is the same in all the distant journey which it has travelled. His list of symptoms agrees pretty nearly with those of Sir William Crichton and of Dr. Schnurrer.

M. Gamba, the Consul of France at Teflis, in Persia, in a letter to the eminent surgeon, Larrey, thus relates the features of the disease. Death ensued sometimes in seven or eight hours. The patient loses his perception: presently vomiting and purging ensue; he experiences violent colics and cramps: then an icy coldness seizes the limbs. This account, and that given by Mr. Cormick, may be easily compared with the symptoms in India, and again with the symptoms in Moscow, as described by Sir W. Crichton, and in Orenburg by Dr. Sokolow.

We perceive that nearly the same remedies have been everywhere adopted. In Persia M. Gamba informs us, that *bleeding*, *calomel*, *laudanum* and preparations of ether, were the medicines employed. Everywhere also the disease has committed its principal ravages amongst the poorer inhabitants, amongst those who are subjected to inclemencies of weather, who are compelled to use severe labor for their daily support; who obtain a scanty and often improper nourish-

\* This gentleman and Dr. Keir, without any communication, both describe the skin of the sick, in India and in Russia, to resemble the cold slimy touch of a frog.

ment ; who are lodged in damp and ill-ventilated abodes, and whose clothing is insufficient and seldom changed. The camp followers of our Indian army seem to have been most fatally affected by the epidemic ; after them, in the gradation of suffering, follow the native troops ; then come the English common soldiery, then the English officers, and, last of all, are found the civilians. Women appear less subject to it than men, and children less subject than adults. In Europe we perceive a similar order of exposure and liability. Everywhere in Europe the lower orders have been the chief sufferers ; the number of remarkable persons and of nobility who have fallen victims has been extremely small ; their names, indeed, might be easily enumerated. When such instances have occurred among the affluent classes, they might probably be explained by particular mental anxiety, or a state of predisposing bad health. The soldiers of the conflicting armies in Poland have been amongst the chief sufferers ; we may easily imagine the privations to which they have been exposed. At Warsaw the Committee of Health announce, that very few persons of easy condition have been ill, and that the disease has expended its chief ravages on the poorer inhabitants of the low and thickly-peopled quarter of the city, which lies near the Vistula. At Riga, the sailors appear to have been most liable to the disorder.

One of the first circumstances which strikes us in the history of this disorder, is the name it has acquired, the term *cholera* seeming to imply that it consists of a redundancy or depravity of the bile ; whereas it appears that the secretion and excretion of the bile are

entirely suspended, and that the matter evacuated by vomiting and purging is quite of a different character. This is an inaccuracy, however, into which the ancients, as well as the moderns, have fallen, and is best elucidated by Alexander Trallian. This ancient author describes three species of Cholera. In the most intense, there is no evacuation of bile ; and he thinks the name might be more properly derived from cholades, an old Greek word used by Homer to signify the bowels, than from cholé, bile. In the species next in degree, however, he says there is a great discharge of bile, and being attended with excruciating spasms like the former, obtains the same name. The third species is a simple bilious diarrhœa, without the spasms. In the disease as it occurs in ordinary practice in this country, most commonly in the month of August, one of the most prominent symptoms is certainly the discharge of a large quantity of bile, and it seems to be the middle species of Trallian.

The common *bilious cholera* is a disease distinct from the *spasmodic cholera*. In India, as well as in Europe, the common bilious cholera is a disease well known, and not usually fatal. In the first, as the name indicates, the discharges are more or less colored with bile, and the general commotion of the alimentary canal seems to arise from a superabundance of bile thrown upon it. In the spasmodic cholera, on the contrary, the discharges are generally whitish, and no hope is held out of recovery until they acquire a bilious tinge.

The common bilious cholera is also sometimes epidemic. It seems to have prevailed epidemically in England in 1669, and with still more severity in 1676. It has been

described by Sydenham ; and that severe bilious epidemic bears some affinity to the present epidemic of spasmodic cholera :—"vehement vomitings, and difficult and painful dejections of ill-conditioned fluids ; agony, and inflammation of the intestines and abdomen, cardialgia, thirst, a quick pulse, often small and unequal, heat and anxiety, nausea and colliquative sweat, spasms of the arms and legs, fainting, coldness of the extremities, and other symptoms of equal danger, which terrify the by-standers, and kill the patients in twenty-four hours."

During the year 1826, six patients were received into the general hospital at Hamburgh with the common bilious cholera, and only one died. During the eight years from 1816 to 1823 inclusively, one hundred and seven soldiers were received into the military hospitals of Malta, ill of the common bilious cholera, and only two died. The mortality, as well as the violence of the spasms, and the color of the discharges, all distinguish this affection from the more dreadful spasmodic one.

#### IV.

##### SINGULAR CASE OF ULCERATION OF THE LOWER PART OF THE URETHRA AND PROSTATE GLAND — SUPERVENING ON THE PASS- ING OF A BOUGIE.

By JOHN C. HOWARD, M.D., Physi-  
cian and Surgeon to the House of  
Industry at South Boston.

For the Boston Med. and Surg. Journal.

JOHN CONDEN, aged 40, was admitted into the hospital Oct. 19th, at which time he complained of very severe pain, which, on examination, was found to be seated in the lower part of the urethra and

prostate gland. I ascertained that he had suffered from a bad stricture, so that he was troubled in evacuating his bladder—that he consulted a physician, who said it would be removed by passing an instrument used for such purposes. The bougie was passed, and he was relieved—for his bladder was very much distended with urine which he could not evacuate. I found him very weak, and heard that he had lost large quantities of blood per urethra whenever he had inclination and attempted to pass water. Upon inquiring how much blood he had lost, he told me two quarts, which seemed to me incredible ; but the nurse showed me the urinal, and there were in it certainly three pints of blood. He was almost sinking, and would soon have died from this hemorrhage, had it not been checked by the administration of Acet. Plumb. grs. ij. Opii. i gr. every 8 hours. It was taken three times. I then directed for him

Bals. Copaib.

Spts. Nit. Dulc. āā ʒj.

Tinct. Camph. Opii, ʒss. M.

A teaspoonful four times a day in flax-seed tea ; also to drink freely of decoction of slippery elm bark. He seemed to improve from this course, passed urine more freely, without much pain, and although at first highly colored, and mixed with blood, became in a few days more natural. Excepting debility, for he was exceedingly weak, he seemed decidedly better. To promote his strength, I prescribed Sulph. Quin. of which he took 4 grs. a day, and apparently with marked benefit. He occasionally complained of pain in the prostate gland and scrotum. On applying my hand, I found the lower part of the penis very tender, and consider-

ably swelled; the scrotum was cedematous and exceedingly painful, having a shiny-red aspect, like what is seen in hydrocele. I ordered fomentations of Foliar. Papav. to be applied, and renewed every 8 hours until I should see him. The next day his scrotum had the same aspect, but the stomach was exceedingly irritable; he was troubled with continual nausea and vomiting. I directed a plaster of Oliver's cerate, with 3ij. of Gum Camphor, to be spread upon it, and this was applied over the epigastrium, and had the effect of quieting the stomach. His bowels being slightly costive, directed Ol. Ricini 3j. Tinct. Camph. Opii 3ij. a table spoonful; if it did not operate in four hours, a second. It operated favorably. The next day he seemed more comfortable, but there was no decided change in the scrotum. On my next visit, I observed a gangrenous spot as large as a cent, on the inferior surface of the scrotum. Aware of the dire portent of such appearances, I immediately ordered poultices made of recent charcoal, to be applied every 8 hours, and Tincture of Quinine 3ij. every two hours:—this course was strictly adhered to during my absence. The next day, much to my surprise, I found him living, although apparently in the last stages of existence:—the gangrenous spot on the scrotum had become much larger, and occupied the whole inferior surface; the face was pale and sharp, the eyes fixed and glassy, the evacuations were unconsciously ejected, and hic-cough and cold extremities indicated approaching dissolution. He died that night.

#### *Post Mortem Examination.*

Feeling considerable interest in this case, and having an idea that

the prostate gland had sustained injury from the passage of the bougie, I was most anxious to examine. The examination was made in the presence of two medical gentlemen, who had previously had an account of the case from me. I made a very careful dissection of the penis from the glans to the prostate. The upper part of the urethra was found perfectly healthy; but the lower part, an inch above the prostate, was in a shocking state of ulceration, which had extended through the prostate gland into the scrotum, which contained a considerable quantity of pus and urine. I passed the handle of my scalpel through the ulcerous hole from the bladder to the scrotum. I saw where the bougie met with obstruction in its passage; it was the prostate gland. Passing the prostate gland, and looking into the bladder, there were appearances which indicated old disease; the coats of the organ were an inch thick, and its inner surface was encrusted all over with a sort of lithic deposit. Leaving the bladder and following the course of the ureters, I examined the kidney, which was healthier than common in cases where the bladder is so diseased. The liver was unusually large, with mottled surface and brittle texture—in short, the drinker's liver.

This case is interesting and important, and it should caution physicians against the unguarded use of the instrument in cases of this description. I am aware that there are those who will say that it is an easy matter to pass the bougie to remove stricture of the urethra—but I apprehend those who express such an opinion, may have seen it passed, without having ever passed it themselves.

*Boston, Nov. 12, 1831.*

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 BOSTON, NOVEMBER 15, 1831.
 

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**SKETCHES OF THE HISTORY OF  
MEDICINE.**

5. It is well known to those conversant with the mythology of the Greeks, that those heroes who had performed peculiar services for mankind, had temples erected to them, the ceremonies of which were confided to a consecrated body of priests. Esculapius, who was regarded as peculiarly the God of Medicine, had numerous temples both in Greece and Asia Minor. Of these, the earliest celebrated was that of Epidaurus, but that of Cos became afterwards the most famous. It was natural to a superstitious age to suppose that the disposition and the power which he had exhibited when among men, would still be manifested toward his faithful worshippers. The sick, therefore, repaired to the temple of Esculapius to be healed. Before it could be approached, however, it was necessary that the supplicant should be prepared by various means, and undergo certain processes essential to his purification. Among these, the most necessary were fasting and repeated ablution; the first was often ordered to be continued for three days in succession, but was for the most part regulated by the priests according to the circumstances of the case. It is evident how powerful were the means thus afforded, of reducing the vital force on the one

hand, and of exalting the imagination on the other. There were circumstances, too, in the situation of these temples, which tended to impart a real virtue to the petition of the votary. Their situation was generally extremely salubrious, removed from all sources of unhealthy exhalations, and often in the vicinity of mineral waters of medicinal efficacy. It appears, indeed, that places possessed of these advantages, were always sought for in constructing these temples. In order to render the baths more effectual, the patients were submitted to various frictions and manipulations, practised by the attendants. At Pergamus, where there was a very ancient temple, a rude fleshbrush was employed; and when the patient, by this and other applications, was put in severe perspiration, he was plunged into cold water, on emerging from which, he was conducted to the temple in the midst of songs and acclamations.

The oracles of the god were generally given in dreams, suggested no doubt by the excited imagination of the devotee, but interpreted by the priests, who were thus enabled to prescribe such remedies as suited them. Many of these were trifling and absurd, and some were extravagant or impracticable. At a later period, orators, philosophers, and sophists, attended the temples, and aided the priests in their interpretations and prescriptions.

When the patients were cured, they offered in the temples votive tablets, on which were inscribed the character of the disease, and the ceremonies or medicines which had

been directed for their cure. These tablets became valuable documents for later physicians, who collected from them many useful facts. Hippocrates, for instance, availed himself of them with much skill and judgment. Similar tablets were recently discovered in the island of the Tiber, where Esculapius had a temple, the origin of which belongs to Roman history. Some of these have been translated, and afford curious remains of ancient superstition. The following are specimens.

"Valerius Aper, a blind soldier, was directed by the god to take the blood of a white cock, with honey, and to make an ointment therewith, and rub it on his eyes for three days. And he saw, and came and publicly gave thanks to the god."

"Julian, who was affected with raising of blood, and was despaired of by every one, was ordered to come and to take from the altar the seeds of a pine apple and to eat them with honey for three days. And he was saved, and coming, gave thanks publicly before the people."

Another circumstance may be mentioned, which served to give importance to these temples, and to maintain the power and influence of the priests. When any one discovered a new remedy, which promised to be of importance, he engraved the formula for its preparation on the columns and the gates of the temple of Esculapius. Thus a celebrated antidote to the bite of venomous animals, discovered by Eudemus, was inscribed on the gates of the temple of Cos. A goldsmith gave to that of Ephesus, a medicament suited to

certain diseases of the eye. In like manner, those who invented surgical instruments deposited them in the temples of the God of Medicine. One designed for extracting teeth was placed by Ecasistratus in the Temple of Delphos.

For the rest, it appears evident that the Greeks could make but little progress in medicine, while the prejudice against mutilating the bodies of the dead rendered dissection impossible. The rites of sepulture were regarded by them as the most sacred of duties. Indeed, their mythology taught them that the souls wandered on the borders of the Styx, without a resting place, until the body had been buried or committed to the flames. Hence, the importance attached by them to this mark of respect, and the severe punishment inflicted for its omission. It is well known that six generals, who had gained a signal victory, were condemned to death by the fickle Athenians, for not collecting the bodies which had fallen into the sea; and Chabrias, to escape a similar fate, deferred pursuing the victory he obtained at Naxos, while he paid the last duties to the warriors who had fallen.

#### MEDICAL USE OF SAGE.

We publish to-day some remarks by a celebrated Scotch Baronet, on the medical virtues of sage. They fell under our eye with peculiar force on account of several cases in which we had noticed unexpected amendment under various forms of low nervous febrile disorder, from the use of this simple vegetable. In Philadelphia,

it is used, we understand, in the treatment of spasmodic diseases, and the celebrated powders, sold under the name of "Dr. Physick's Epileptic Powders," are composed of ground ginger, whole mustard seed, and powdered leaves of the common sage. We are too apt to undervalue everything which may be procured in abundance, without trouble or expense; and although no one would think of relying on the *Salvia* for the removal of severe disease, it may, and probably does possess more medicinal virtue than is commonly attributed to it by the faculty.

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#### MECKEL'S ANATOMY.

THIS work is already known by reputation to most physicians in Europe and this country. We are glad to find the American faculty are about to receive a translation of the work, by Dr. Doane, of New York, which promises to be accurate, and a great accession to our sources of anatomical knowledge. We have been favored by a friend with a few sheets of this translation, which reads well. It has been made from the French and German editions together, by which means the errors of the former will be prevented from creeping into the English version. When the whole work comes to us, we shall speak more fully of its good or ill deserts.

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#### HOTEL DIEU, PARIS.

WE are among those who have many very agreeable associations connected with that great and long celebrated Hospital at Paris, the *Hôtel Dieu*,

the scene of the labors of Bichat, and the present theatre of Dupuytren. Several generations of men who have adorned their profession, have successively learned and taught within the walls of this ancient institution. But the line is to be extended no further. The edifice is to be demolished, and its site appropriated to different objects.

These steps are rendered necessary by the state of the building, and the confined nature of its present situation. The patients, probably about two thousand in number, are to be removed to the *Hôtel des Invalides*, and we doubt not a new edifice will be erected on some more airy spot, which will correspond with the improvements of the age.

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#### FACTS RESPECTING CHOLERA.

A GENTLEMAN, just arrived from Hamburg, informs us that the Cholera was approaching that place, and that a large hospital had been erected for the accommodation of such of the poor as might require it.

In consequence of the reputation of cantharides and cajepout oil, in the cure of cholera, those articles have risen very much in price in England and on the continent. In this country the oil has already advanced one hundred per cent.

The intendant of Charlestown, S. C., has directed a strict quarantine on all vessels coming from ports where this disease prevails.

A letter dated at Messina, August 29, says, "In consequence of the rapid progress made upon the continent by that dreadful malady, the Cholera Morbus, our health depart-

ment has put on long quarantines from almost every quarter. Vessels arriving from England, from the French ports outside the gut, and from the Spanish ports inside the gut, are subject to 28 and 40 days quarantine; from Venice and Trieste, the quarantine is 28 and 40 days, and from other Austrian ports in the Adriatic, vessels are not received at all; from Malta, 30 and 40 days quarantine. From Genoa, Leghorn, and Marseilles, the quarantine is only 7 days.

The British government still persevere in vigorous measures to prevent, if possible, the introduction of the disease into England.

Dr. B. Hawkins, of London, an eminent and very able physician of that city, has published a valuable history of this epidemic. He has given in his book a minute account of the travels of the disease from place to place, commencing in India, and following it up to the present time. His facts are gathered from the highest authorities, which are all referred to, and most of them, such as official reports, quarantine orders, &c., are given entire, with their signatures, in an ample appendix. It is the best view of the whole ground which has yet been taken, and a short extract from it is offered the reader in the Journal of to-day.

In his treatise, or rather statement of facts respecting the contagiousness of the cholera, Dr. H. presents the following:—

“Wherever measures were taken to prevent communication in the Russian dominions, there the disease has been totally checked, or has made but little progress. Peters-

burgh has not escaped, because a strict quarantine has not been observed between it and Moscow. The Moravian Colony on the right bank of the Wolga, and several German colonies in the government of Saratov, around which the disease was violent, adopted the system of exclusion, and were also unhurt. At Caramala Gubeewa some Russian peasants, living together, scarcely a hundred yards from the village, shut up their hamlet on the first report of the disease having appeared in their vicinity, and by enforcing a strict quarantine during the prevalence of the epidemic, remained in health. The large establishment composing the Academy of Military Cadets, at Moscow, was preserved by a similar plan from the scourge which was so active on all sides of it.

“Can we have a better proof of the contagious nature of the disease than that *insulation*, or separation from the sick, is almost universally found to preserve from the evil? M. Gomba, the French Consul at Teflis, in Persia, a person who probably was not devoted to any medical theory, writes to Baron Larrey, that the best and most sure mode of escaping from the calamity is *insulation and a residence in the mountains*. Of nine medical practitioners who were living at Teflis at the time of the invasion of the epidemic, four died during the first few days.

“Let us hear the history of M. de Lesseps, the Consul of France at Aleppo, an individual who probably has never interfered in medical discussions. When the Cholera approached that city in 1822, this gentleman retired, in company with all who wished to be of his party, to a garden at some distance from the city. His asylum was enclosed with walls, and was surrounded by a large fossé: there were only two doors, one for entrance, the other for going out. As long as the malady lasted, he admitted nothing from out

of doors without submitting it to the precautions observed in lazarettoes. His colony comprised *two hundred* persons, and consisted not only of Franks more or less acclimatised, but also of several natives. *Not a single individual contracted the disease*; while, at the very same time, within the city, four thousand beings perished in the space of eighteen days."

"We perceive that nearly all the governments of Europe have established quarantines; even the government of Bavaria has lately followed the example. Austria has drawn a sanitary cordon between Galicia and Hungary; and amongst the governments of Europe, however contrary to their interest, the question of contagion is no longer agitated."

**Method of preventing Iron and Steel from rusting.**—This easy method consists in heating the steel or iron until it burns the hand; then rub it with virgin or pure white wax. Warm it a second time so as to melt and divide off the wax, and

rub it with a piece of cloth or leather until it shines well. This simple operation, by filling all the pores of the metal, defends it completely from rust, even though it should be exposed to moisture.—*Jour. de Connois. Usuelles.*

**Skulls.**—Dr. Samuel G. Morton, of Philadelphia, has recently deposited in the Academy of Natural Sciences of that city, an extensive series of *skulls*, embracing those of the different races of men and the various classes of inferior animals. A principal object in forming this collection, is to investigate the peculiarities of the aboriginal inhabitants of the American continent; and persons who are in possession of Indian crania, are respectfully invited to communicate with Dr. M. in reference to them.—*Am. Jour. of Sci.*

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending Nov. 4, 21. Males, 10—Females, 11. Stillborn, 2.

Of consumption, 2—accidental, 2—asthma, 1—unknown, 1—infantile, 2—dropsy, 1—lung fever, 2—croup, 2—rheumatic fever, 1—typhous fever, 2—throat distemper, 2—paralysis, 1—liver complaint, 1—scarlet fever, 1.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

### LECTURES ON THE DISEASES OF THE EYE.

A COURSE of Lectures on the Diseases of the Eye, will be delivered at the Rooms of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, to commence on Wednesday, the ninth of November, and continue twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday.

The demonstration of the anatomy of the organ will be much aided by improved wax models just received by the Institution from Italy.

The Pathology of the Eye will be explained by illustrations from the cases which attend the Infirmary.

The Lectures will be delivered in the afternoon, at half past three o'clock, which will afford opportunity to Medical Students to attend.

JOHN JEFFRIES.

October 2, 1831.

\*.\* The Lectures are delivered for the benefit of the Infirmary.

Oct. 18.

### EUROPEAN LEECHES.

JARVIS & PEIRSON, have just received a prime lot of large European Leeches. They were selected at Gottenburg, with great care, by a person well acquainted with the business, and will be applied, without additional expense, in any part of the city.

188 Washington Street.

Oct. 11.

### THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL

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